

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-03 INR-07 EB-07 /042 W

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R 201540Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2255

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID EG

SUBJECT: SCA REQUEST FOR COE HOPPER DREDGER

REF: CAIRO 1081; STATE 36944

1. AS INDICATED CAIRO REFTEL, WE BELIEVE THAT COE ASSISTANCE TO SCA IN LEASING HOPPER DREDGER WOULD BE A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF USG SUPPORT FOR AND INTEREST IN EGYPT'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IN OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL. AS SUCH, OUR DOING SO WOULD BE A PLUS FACTOR IN OUR DEVELOPING POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH EGYPT. SAME TIME WE WOULD NOT CONTEND OUR DOING SO IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO US NATIONAL INTEREST.

2. IN TALK WITH MASHOUR TODAY, HE REAFFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR THAT PURPOSE OF REQUEST IS TO CLEAR PORT SAID OF SILT ACCUMULATION. SINGLE SCA OWNED HOPPER DREDGER IS INADEQUATE TO DO THE JOB. HE ESTIMATED LEASED HOPPER DREDGER WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ABOUT A YEAR TO COMPLETE THE JOB. SIMILAR SCA REQUESTS TO LEASE A HOPPER DREDGER HAD BEEN SENT TO BRITISH, FRENCH AND WEST GERMANS. NO REPLY YET RECEIVED FROM ANYONE.

3. MASHOUR CONFIRMED THAT HE IS AWARE OF GOE DECISION THAT US AID FUNDS INITIALLY EARMARKED FOR SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE HAVE AS RESULT GOE DECISION BEEN ALLOCATED ELSEWHERE

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AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO LEASE HOPPER DREDGER IF PROVIDED

BY COE. IT IS HIS INTENTION TO EVALUATE WHATEVER LEASING OFFERS ARE RECEIVED BY SCA, BOTH IN TERMS OF COMPARATIVE COST AND AVAILABILITY TIME. HE IS ANXIOUS TO GET THE DREDGING WORK UNDERWAY SOONEST AND QUICK AVAILABILITY WILL BE A FACTOR IN HIS DECISION. THUS ANY COE OFFER WILL BE EVALUATED AGAINST SIMILAR OFFERS FROM ELSEWHERE.

4. IN LIGHT ABOVE AND HAVING IN MIND DOD'S CONCERN THAT COE IS BEHIND ON ITS SCHEDULE FOR SERVICING US PORTS, WE RECOMMEND A REASONABLE EFFORT BE MADE TO GET DOD APPROVAL FOR HOPPER DREDGER LEASING, BUT THAT WE NOT MAKE A FEDERAL CASE OUT OF IT. LEASING SUCH HOPPER DREDGER WOULD, OF COURSE, ASSIST COE IN DEVELOPING ITS LONG-HELD DESIRE FOR CLOSER TECHNICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SCA AND SUCH A RELATIONSHIP COULD BE OF SOME USE. HOWEVER, COE OUGHT PROPERLY TO CARRY THE BALL IN IMPRESSING UPON DOD THE TECHNICAL IMPORTANCE OF SUCH A MISSION VIS-A-VIS ITS OTHER DELINQUENT COMMITMENTS. STATE COULD OFFER SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE.
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